

What to do if you know a child who is a victim:

Tell someone in authority if you think you know a child who is being abused. Call child protective services in the locality in which the child lives or in which the abuse occurred. Your doctor, a counselor, police officer, clergyman or teacher will know how to get help for the child.

What to do if your child is a victim:

It is often very difficult for a child to tell an adult about abuse. Tell the child that he was right to tell you and that he has been very brave. Help the child understand that the abuse was not his fault and that, although you may seem angry, you are not angry with him in any way. Call child protective services or the Virginia Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline.

What to teach your children:

- ❖ Talk to them about abuse, even if you would rather protect them from knowing about the bad things that happen in the world.
- ❖ Teach them that nobody has the right to hurt them or touch them where they don't want to be touched.
- ❖ Explain the "bathing suit rule:" nobody but a doctor during a physical exam should touch them in a place that a bathing suit covers.
- ❖ Be open to your child's questions about abuse and listen when your child is trying to tell you something.
- ❖ Ask the child about visits to caregivers and time spent with babysitters.

About Prevent Child Abuse Virginia:

Prevent Child Abuse Virginia is a statewide private, nonprofit organization. We are dedicated to improving family life in Virginia by valuing children, strengthening families and engaging communities. Our activities are concentrated in many areas, including direct service programs, professional training and development, public awareness activities and advocacy. Prevent Child Abuse Virginia coordinates the Healthy Families Virginia initiative and is the state chapter of the National Family Support Roundtable and Prevent Child Abuse America.

For more information call or write:



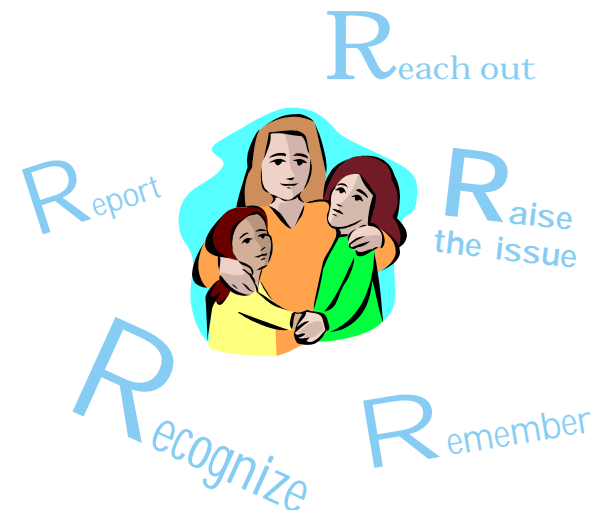
**Prevent Child Abuse
Virginia**

4901 Fitzhugh Avenue, Suite 200
Richmond, VA 23230
1-800-CHILDREN
mail@pcav.org
www.preventchildabuseva.org

Virginia Chapter: Prevent Child Abuse America



You Can Help Prevent Child Abuse and Neglect



... just remember the five
"R's" of prevention

Virginia Coalition for Child Abuse Prevention

c/o Prevent Child Abuse Virginia
4901 Fitzhugh Avenue, Suite 200
Richmond, Virginia 23230
1-800-CHILDREN

*A child may be helpless, but you are not. Here are the five **R**'s of preventing child abuse and neglect. . .*

Remember the Risk Factors:

Child abuse and neglect occur in all segments of our society, but the risk factors are greater in families where parents:

- ❖ Seem to be having economic, housing or personal problems.
- ❖ Are isolated from their families or communities.
- ❖ Have difficulty controlling anger or stress.
- ❖ Are dealing with physical or mental health issues.
- ❖ Had a painful childhood. Adults who were mistreated as children may unintentionally continue the pattern of abuse with their own children.
- ❖ Abuse alcohol or drugs.
- ❖ Are inexperienced with children or have unrealistic expectations of what a child can do. They may have no models of successful family relationships from which to learn.

Recognize the warning signs:

The behavior of children may signal abuse or neglect long before any change in physical appearance. Some of the signs may include:

- ❖ Nervousness around adults.
- ❖ Aggression toward adults or other children.
- ❖ Inability to stay awake or to concentrate for extended periods.

- ❖ Sudden, dramatic changes in personality or activities.
- ❖ Knowledge about sex that is unusual for the child's age or stage of development.
- ❖ Frequent or unexplained bruises or injuries.
- ❖ Poor hygiene or dress that is inappropriate for the weather.

Report Suspected Abuse or Neglect:

If you suspect abuse or neglect may be occurring, report it. Call the department of social services in the community where the child lives or where the abuse occurred. Ask for child protective services. If you think a child is in immediate danger, call the police.

Virginia maintains a 24-hour hotline for questions about reporting child abuse and neglect:

**Virginia Child Abuse
and Neglect Hotline**
1-800-552-7096
(voice/TTY)



Raise the Issue

By educating yourself and others you can help your community prevent child abuse and neglect from happening in the first place.

- ❖ Call 1-800-CHILDREN for information that you can photocopy and post in your workplace, apartment building, library, laundromat, place of worship, school, beauty parlor or supermarket.
- ❖ Contact your school district, library or faith group about support programs for parents and how you can help. If none exist, encourage them to sponsor or develop resources for parents.
- ❖ Call or write your elected officials and ask them to advocate for parent support and child abuse prevention programs.

Reach Out:

Anything you do to support kids and parents can help reduce the stress that often leads to abuse and neglect.

- ❖ Be a friend to a parent or child you know. Talk to your neighbors about looking out for one another's children.
- ❖ Help relieve financial stress by donating or lending used clothing, furniture or toys.
- ❖ Volunteer your time and money for programs in your community that support children and families.

